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ABSTRACT

In the critical thinking movement, there is little focus on moral issues. If definitions of critical thinking included reasoning about what to do, as well as what to believe, there would be a link between critical thinking and social moral beliefs. However, very rarely do critical thinking textbooks and programs concern themselves with assessing moral arguments. Reasons for this omission include: (1) lack of teacher training; (2) controversy over the teaching of moral issues in schools; (3) the view that value judgments are not subject to rational evaluation; and (4) a conservative political climate. The three most widely used approaches to moral or values education are values clarification, cognitive development, and inculcation. Each approach has its weaknesses. Social moral judgments should be impartial, universal, and consistent across cases. In classroom settings, a useful approach to defending moral arguments is principle testing. Several aspects of critical thinking are involved in applying the following test to determine if social moral judgments meet the necessary criteria: the role exchange test, the universal consequences test, the new cases test, and the subsumption test. The objective of applying these tests is to foster good judgment that involves not only knowing the standards for making and assessing empirical and conceptual claims and arguments but also the development of certain sensitivities and disposition. (IAH)

MONTCLAIR STATE

Thinking Critically About Moral Questions

Ian Wright and Carole La Bar

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The Institute for Critical Thinking at Montclair State is designed to support and enrich faculty development efforts toward critical thinking as an educational goal. Working closely with faculty from Montclair State and colleagues from campuses around the world, its primary purpose is to serve as a catalyst in the development of educational excellence across the curriculum at Montclair State. A collaborative, multi-disciplinary approach is in process, with attention to the study of both the theoretical aspects of critical thinking across the disciplines and their implications for teaching and learning at the college level. In addition, the Institute reaches out to colleges and schools, helping them to incorporate critical thinking into their curricular plans.

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Thinking Critically About Moral Questions

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Critical thinking is receiving a great deal of attention in educational circles in North America. The prestigious College Board (1983), the Task Force on Education for Economic Growth (1983), the Rockefeller Commission on the Humanities (1980), and the Carnegie Foundation's Ernest Boyer (1983) have all called for improvements in the reasoning abilities of students. The California College system has mandated a course on critical thinking for all its students, and the state university system prescribes a study of critical thinking as a graduation requirement. Also, in California and in other states, there has been or is a state-wide testing program in the public schools. There have been a plethora of conferences, in-service education programs, journal articles, books, and curriculum materials in the area. Unfortunately, in the critical thinking 'movement' there is little focus on moral issues. This article is an attempt to redress this oversight.

Most, if not all, of the crucial problems that face us today are normative ones, or at least have a normative dimension. In deciding between personal interests and social values, or between conflicting social values, we are placed squarely in the normative domain. To ask the question, what ought I to do, or what is the right thing for me or my social group/society to do, necessarily involves values, and moral values in particular.

In this article we will focus on social moral beliefs,[1] that is those beliefs which a person accepts as rules or principles of action which determine what is right for her to do. In addition, she believes that the rules should be endorsed and followed by all others in her society, and 2) that it is appropriate to encourage adherence to the rules by the use of social sanctions (Coombs, 1986, p. 7).

The connection between social moral beliefs and critical thinking may not, perhaps, be obvious to everyone. However, for those who define critical thinking as including reasoning about what to do, as well as what to believe (Ennis, 1984; Hitchcock, 1983), the link is established. Reasoning about what to believe can clearly include moral beliefs, and reasoning about what to do is necessarily normative and, in many cases, moral. Cannon and Weinstein (1986) correctly point out that reasoning about moral concerns entails using all the elements of critical thinking (the assessment of one's own and others' arguments, empirical and conceptual claims and so on) which are the basic ingredients of most critical thinking programs and textbooks. However, these programs and textbooks are rarely concerned with assessing the moral beliefs included in many arguments.[2] Why is the

assessment of moral arguments often ignored? We believe there are a number of reasons for the omission.

First, there is the commonly held view that values are opinions and thus are not subject to rational assessment. However, as Weddle (1985) argues, the term 'opinion' is subject to many interpretations ranging from 'mere' opinions to the learned opinions of judges. And in both cases, and especially the latter, they can, and should be subject to assessment on the basis of the quality of the evidence. If value judgments are just opinions, and one opinion is as good as any other, then value questions could not be debated seriously. Yet social policy questions (which are necessarily value ones) are argued about, reasons are given for and against particular positions, and, decisions are made, at least some of the time, on the strength of these reasons. Thus, the views that value judgments are not subject, or cannot be subject to rational evaluation are unwarranted.

A second reason may be that moral questions are considered to be controversial and that, as some moral questions are intractable and raise powerful emotional responses, they are too stress-producing for students. This argument fails in a number of respects. Not all moral questions are controversial -- murder,[3] for example, is considered immoral, and there is no controversy about it. Those that are controversial -- whether or not euthanasia should be permitted and, if so, under what circumstances; or whether or not AIDS sufferers should be quarantined, are ones about which society has to make decisions. And, if we want students to make reasonable decisions, both as students and as adults, then we must provide opportunities for them to learn how to go about making intelligent decisions.

Scriven (1985) makes a passionate and cogent plea for an education which includes serious discussion of controversial issues which affect students -- survival education, in his terms. He argues that by failing to confront issues in a critical manner, we subvert democratic values, and fail to show that there are good reasons for democratic values. He argues:

> The reasons are first, that even if one believes the old values are the best values, the reasons for, and against, them must be rehearsed by each generation or it will rebel against them. The second reason is that the application of any system of values to new cases is terribly difficult (as the conflict between religions on any specific moral issue makes clear) and requires extensive open critical discussion (Ibid., p. 10).

Scriven rightly notes that implementation of his 'survival' education may be extremely difficult. It may produce stress in students; it may well run counter to parental views about what schools should be doing; and it may threaten our own beliefs. However, if handled wisely, controversial issues can be critically examined in the schools. Indeed, in some cases they have been or are.[4]

There are a number of other reasons why moral concerns are not generally dealt with in critical thinking texts and programs. School curricula, although often espousing critical thinking goals, still focus on the learning of facts. Given the socio-political climate in both Canada and the U.S.A., this is understandable; serious, critical discussion of moral issues in schools is an anathema to many politicians who control the school curriculum, as well as to many interest groups (Siegal, 1985, p. 71). Additionally, teachers, in the main, are not trained to teach about moral issues even though they can't avoid them in either the day-to-day operation of their classrooms, or in much of the content which they teach. Here, the blame, in part, can be levelled at teacher education programs, both pre-service and in-service. Teachers, according to Goodlad (1984), stress memorization and the seeking of right answers.

> And why should we expect teachers to teach otherwise? This is the way they were taught in school and college (ibid., p. 15).

These factors -- lack of teacher training, controversy over the teaching of issues in schools, the view that value judgments are 'opinions', and thus not subject to rational evaluation, and a conservative political climate- - are all stumbling blocks. And, in our opinion, they exist because many people have vague and/or confused views about social morality. This vagueness and/or confusion extends to the field of moral/values education.

The three most widely used approaches are Values Clarification, Cognitive Developmentism and Inculcation, each of which deals with moral/value questions in a different way. Values Clarification theorists (Raths *et al.*, 1978) would have us believe that if one follows the seven steps of the Value Clarification process, then one has a defensible judgment, be that a prudential judgment or a moral one. Moral development theorists (Kohlberg, 1984) would have us believe that if we engage students in moral dilemma discussions then they will progress from a lower stage of moral reasoning to the next higher one, and eventually reach the level of principled morality. At this level "universal principles of justice, the equality of human rights and respect for the dignity of human beings as individual persons (Kohlberg, 1976, p. 35)," provide the bases for defensible moral judgments. Other theorists (Rucker *et al.*, 1969) would have us believe that certain moral values ought to be instilled in students. This inculcation approach is also advocated by certain fundamentalist groups, and such organizations as Educational Research Analysts Inc. (a group which seeks to remove 'objectionable' textbooks from the schools).[5] None of these approaches, in our view, do justice to all of the complexities of making rational moral judgments. Although all three approaches have been criticized by a variety of scholars on a number of grounds, it is sufficient here to merely note the following weaknesses. Values Clarification does not differentiate carefully enough between moral judgments and other types of value judgments, the Kohlbergian approach does not pay serious enough attention to the assessment of empirical evidence, and the inculcation approach is clearly

incompatible with critical thinking.

If the teaching of critical thinking is to include the making and assessing of moral arguments (arguments concerning what is right, or what ought to be done) how are we to conceive of our task? According to Cannon and Weinstein (1986, p. 33) the answer lies in the concept of rationality itself. They claim that moral considerations are at the heart of rationality.

> The heart of rationality is surely an appeal to a mutual recognition of independent minds. And a rational person is surely one who regards others as capable of raising considerations that deserve to be taken seriously into account, considerations which otherwise might fail to be raised at all. In this respect, rationality itself requires that other persons be treated as ends to whom one must be answerable.

It is, however, arguable that morality is at the heart of rationality; one could justify acting only in one's best self-interest. For example, a person who appears to accept the prevailing moral code, but who breaks the rules whenever there is a good chance of being undetected in order to fulfil his own interests, could be regarded as a rational person. Further, in a world where there are no moral rules, a paradigm case of rationality would be to act in one's best self-interest. This still leaves us with the questions of justifying morality itself, and justifying any moral judgment as being a rational one.

An intelligent answer to these questions lies in the argument which claims that it is rational to adopt a social morality. Baier (1965), for instance, after Hobbes, claims that if everybody acted on the basis of maximizing their own self-interest, then the consequences would be less desirable for each person than if a system of rules was adopted. In a pluralistic society in which different groups of people have differing moral values, conflicts between groups will inevitably arise. The rules of adjudication which are most likely to be acceptable to rational people with differing moral values are those which are impartial, that is, which promote the good of, or prevent harm to everyone alike. And, if they are observed by all members of society, then everyone has good reason to observe them.

Clearly, the judgment which prescribes a course of action, policy, program, etc. to 'settle' a value conflict, at the individual or social level, must be demonstrably justifiable. According to many moral theorists, one has good reason for judging a course of action as morally justifiable if it is impartial and capable of being universalized (Singer, 1963; Hare, 1963). Perry's (1976, p. 43) formulation of the requirement is:

> An impartial judgment is one which does not "respect persons"; that is, the author of the judgment must be prepared to make the same judgment concerning the subject of evaluation no matter what person or persons it might involve, relevant facts

remaining unchanged. And a judgment is universalizable if its author believes that it is the proper judgment for anyone on any occasion to make concerning the same subject or other subjects similiar to it in all relevant respects.

How might this account be operationalized in the classroom, if one was persuaded that schools should attempt to develop critical thinking in the broad sense, that is, addressing moral, as well as empirical and conceptual matters? While a wide variety of abilities and dispositions need to be developed, and a large number of concepts, distinctions and standards need to be learned (Ennis, 1980; Coombs,1986), we will discuss here only the criteria for assessing moral judgments. Coombs (1980) has described in detail one such way. What follows is an introduction to, and a synopsis of what he labels 'principle tests.'

In any decision concerning what ought to be done there will be a number of alternative actions which could be chosen. Each alternative will be based upon a particular value standard, either implicit or explicit. Let us consider a particular case in which the reasoners accept as warranted an empirical claim, but disagree over what action to take.[6]

Jim's Argument

It is morally wrong to allow unmarried girls to buy birth control pills, because this makes it possible for them to have sex without worrying about getting pregnant, so they will feel free to have sexual relations.

Jane's Argument

It is only right to allow unmarried girls to buy birth control pills because this makes it possible for them to have sex without worrying about getting pregnant, so they will feel free to have sexual relations.

Both Jim and Jane accept as true the same empirical claim, but they arrive at opposite conclusions. These conclusions only make sense if Jim and Jane accept two conflicting moral value standards. Logically, Jim must believe that it is *wrong* to allow unmarried girls to feel free to have sexual relations, whereas Jane must believe it is *right*. In 'practical syllogism' form, their arguments look like this.

Jim's argument

Major premise (value standard): It is morally wrong to allow unmarried girls to feel free to have sexual relations.

Minor Premise (empirical claim): Allowing unmarried girls to buy birth control pills makes it possible for them to have sex without worrying about getting pregnant, so they will feel free to have sexual relations.

Conclusion: It is morally wrong to allow unmarried girls to buy birth control pills.

Jane's argument

Major premise (value standard): It is morally right to allow unmarried girls to feel free to have sexual relations.

Minor premise (empirical claim): Allowing unmarried girls to buy birth control pills makes it possible for them to have sex without worrying about getting pregnant, so they will feel free to have sexual relations.

Conclusion: It is morally right to allow unmarried girls to buy birth control pills.

The question now is, which value standard is the most defensible? Given our argument in the first part of this paper, that social moral judgments should be impartial, universalizable and consistent across cases, then the following tests can be applied.

The Role Exchange Test asks the reasoner to put herself into the shoes of the person(s) most adversely affected by the action under consideration, and then judge if the proposed action is defensible. Simply stated, the question is, "If I was her, how would I like X done to me?" However, the test isn't quite this simple. First, it is only applicable in cases where harm is likely to occur, and, second, the concern is not whether or not I would like X, but rather whether or not X is right. A child might not like going to the dentist, but it might be right for someone to insist that she does. The steps in applying this test are: a) to imagine what it would be like to be in the situation of the other person and experience the consequences the action would have for her, b) to consider whether or not it would be right for the other person to take the action if *you* were the one experiencing the consequences, and c) to decide whether or not to accept or reject the conclusion because of the consequences to the other person.

The Universal Consequences Test asks the reasoner to imagine and then assess the consequences if everyone who was likely to carry out a particular action actually did it. A simple version of this test can be found in the frequently heard question, "What if everyone did that?" The speaker is asking someone to imagine the consequences of everyone doing something, and asking the actor to refrain from doing it as, presumably, it would result in adverse effects. But this question is too simplistic; proper application of the test requires that we consider how many people are likely to want to perform the same action *for the same reasons.* Thus, one has to a) imagine what the consequences would be if everyone who is likely to want to perform the same action for the same reason were to do so, b) consider whether or not the imagined consequences would be acceptable, and c) conclude that the action is right if the consequences are acceptable and subject the judgment to the other principle tests or conclude that the action

is wrong if the consequences are unacceptable, or find a new reason to support the action and test this new reason.

The point of the *New Cases Test* is to assess whether an action in question is consistent with other actions which logically fall under the same value standard. If a judge sentenced one criminal to twenty years in prison, and another was given a conditional discharge and there was no relevant differences between the two cases, we would be outraged. We expect similar cases to be judged similarly. However, the power and significance of this test does not rest on applying any relevantly similar case to a value standard. Rather it depends on applying difficult cases. If a reasoner has decided that it is always wrong to steal, it is inappropriate to keep on asking "Would you steal from a department store, a bank, an acquaintance?", and so on. However, the question, "What if you were starving and the only way you could get food was to steal, then would you steal?" is likely to have the 'bite' necessary to challenge the reasoner. The steps in the New Cases Test are: a) choose a new case that logically falls under the moral principle underlying your moral judgment, b) consider whether or not you would be willing to judge this case in the same way as you judged the action in your original decision, c) if you do judge the case in the same way and you think it is the hardest case you can imagine, then accept the decision. If you can think of harder cases, go back to step b, and d) if you cannot accept your original decision either reject your decision, or find a new reason for accepting it.

The *Subsumption Test* operates somewhat differently than the other three. Its point is to determine if the value standard in question falls under and is consistent with a more general or higher order principle which one accepts. Applying the test is a matter of finding out whether or not a particular value standard can be deduced from another standard or principle. To do this, we must ascertain the reasons a person uses to justify her value standard. Returning to the above stealing situation, if the reasoner judges it right to steal to save a life, then there is a higher order value principle which, in this context, overrides the not-stealing standard. Having ascertained that there is a higher order principle, we then assess this by applying the other principle tests. If this principle 'passes' the other tests, we can say that the principle passes the Subsumption Test. In step-by-step form, the test is applied by, a) formulating the more general principle on which your decision is based, b) considering whether or not your more general principle is acceptable by performing other principle tests, c) deciding that your general principle is acceptable and accept your original decision, d) deciding that your general principle is not acceptable and either rejecting it and your original decision or finding new reasons for your decision and testing the general principle on which this decision is based.

In assessing any social moral standard, all the principle tests should be applied where appropriate. It is not enough to use just the New Cases Test as one's principle, even though consistent, it could be consistently wrong. However, some tests have more power than others in particular contexts. The Universal Consequences Test is most apposite when there would be

adverse consequences to many people, and not where the consequences would be disadvantageous to one person. The Role-Exchange Test is most compelling in situations where one person could be adversely affected. As Coombs (1980, p. 46) states:

> No one of these tests takes precedence over another. If a principle fails any one of them, the moral judgment that it warrants must be reconsidered. How then do we decide which test to use in any given situation? Basically, we must choose the test we think the principle is most likely to fail.

In order to carry out these tests one needs to be proficient at several aspects of critical thinking. For example, the New Cases Test relies on cases which are analogous to the initial one. Thus, one must be able to judge whether or not there are relevant similarities between the original and the new case.

To demonstrate how all of what has been stated above is put into practice, a particular moral problem is presented.

The Case of Donald C.

Two months after being discharged from three years of military service as a jet pilot, the world of Donald C. exploded in a flash of burning gas. He was then twenty-six years old, unmarried, and a college graduate. An athlete in high school, he loved sports and the outdoors. Rodeos were his special interest, and he performed in them with skill. Upon leaving the military in May, 1973, Donald joined his father's successful real estate business. The two of them had always had a close and warm relationship. On July 25, 1973, they were together, appraising farm land. Without realizing it, they parked their car near a large propane gas transmission line; the line was leaking. Later, when they started their automobile, the ignition of the motor set off a severe and unexpected explosion. Donald, his father, and the surrounding countryside were enveloped in fire. The father died on the way to the hospital, and Donald was admitted in a critical but conscious state. He sustained second- and third-degree burns over sixty-eight percent of his body, mostly third-degree burns. Both eyes were blinded by corneal damage, his ears were mostly destroyed, and he sustained severe burns to his face, upper extremities, body, and legs.

During the next nine months, Donald underwent repeated skin grafting, enucleation of his right eye, and amputation of the distal parts of the fingers on both hands. The left eye was surgically closed in order to protect it from the danger of infection; the cornea was badly scarred and the retina was partially detached. His hands, deformed by contractures, were useless, unsightly stubs. When admitted to the University of Texas Medical Branch Hospitals in April, 1974, the patient had many infected areas on his body and legs. He had to be bathed daily in the Hubbard tank to control infection.

From the day of the accident onward, Donald persistently stated that he did not want to live. Nonetheless, he had continued to accept treatment. Two days after admission to the University hospital, however, he refused to give permission for further corrective surgery on his hands. He became adamant in his insistence that he be allowed to leave the hospital and return home to die, a certain consequence of leaving since only daily tanking could prevent overwhelming infection. The tankings were continued despite his protests. His mother, a thoughtful and courageous woman, was frantic; his surgeons were frustrated and perplexed.

Although calm and rational most of the time, the patient had frequent periods of childlike rage, fear, and tearfulness. He engaged his mother in arguments regarding his demand to leave the hospital which, of course, he was physically incapable of doing unless she agreed to take him home by ambulance.

At this juncture, a psychiatric consultant was asked to see Donald. Prior to seeing him he was given the impression that Donald probably needed to be declared mentally incompetent so that a legal guardian could be appointed to give the necessary permission for further surgery and other treatments. His mother was understandably in favor of his remaining in the hospital. She was deeply concerned about her son's welfare, and the prospect of taking him home to die was more than she could bear. She was a deeply religious woman and was concerned lest her son die without re-accepting the church which he had left. His mother stated, "He always wanted to do things for himself and in his own way." The psychiatrist soon concluded that the mother's summary was apt. In the course of the first few interviews it was apparent that Donald was a very stubborn and determined man; he was also bright, articulate, logical, and coherent-- not by any criterion mentally incompetent. He summarized his position with the statement, "I do not want to go on as a blind and crippled person." Arguments that surgery could restore some degree of useful function to his hands, and perhaps some useful vision to his remaining eye, were of no avail. His determination to leave the hospital was unshakable, and he demanded to see his attorney in order to obtain his release by court order if necessary. (Case Studies in Bioethics. Case 228, *Hastings Centre Report*, Vol. 5, No. 3, June, 1975, p. 9.)

In discussing this controversial issue in the classroom, one might ask students what alternative courses of action exist. In this case there are only two-- one is to allow Donald C. to make his own decision (whether he should go home to die, or stay in hospital and treatment be ceased, or physicians should aid in his death by giving him an overdose of drugs, are only relevant if it is decided that he has the right to his own decision) --and the other is to prolong treatment. Arguments can be mounted for both alternative actions. For example:

Major premise (Value standard): Treatment should be continued for any patient who can eventually lead a reasonably satisfying life.

Minor premise (Empirical claim): Donald C. can eventually lead a reasonably satisfying life.
Conclusion (Value judgment): Therefore, treatment should be continued for Donald C.

And in support of the alternative decision, one might argue:

Major premise (Value standard): People have the right to make their own decisions when they have no chance of recovery.

Minor premise (Empirical claim): Donald C. has no chance of recovery.

Conclusion (Value judgment): Therefore, Donald C. has the right to make his own decision.

These arguments have to be evaluated, of course, prior to the application of the principle tests. In the above arguments, we would need to evaluate evidence of Donald's chances of recovery, and his ability in the future to live a reasonably satisfying life. Further, we'd need to be clear about what 'recovery' and a 'reasonably satisfying life' would mean in this context. This would not be an easy task as specialized medical knowledge would be required in order to evaluate claims concerning Donald's chances of recovery. As laypersons we would have to rely on the views of authorities and judge these as best we could. Further, we would have to consider other reasons for either decision, and ascertain whether any one of these created an overriding reason in support of a particular decision.

Assume, however, that we have evaluated the empirical claims and found them warranted. As the arguments are valid, only the major premises remain to be defended. The four principle tests can be used as follows:

Role Exchange

For those who have decided that the treatment should be continued we could ask, "Would it be right for me in Donald's position, to have treatment continued?" For those who believe that Donald should have the right to make his own decision, the role exchange questions are not concerned with Donald, but with those adversely affected. So, for example, we might ask whether it would be right if we were the doctors or Donald's mother, if Donald exercised his right to make his own decision.

Universal Consequences

Here we could ask the following questions to test the two value principles: "What if everyone who was blind and crippled, saw no future for themselves and claimed the right to make their own decisions was allowed to make the decision to die?" and "What would be the consequences to society if doctors used all possible means to preserve the lives of all seriously

ill or injured persons?"

New Cases Test

If the decision was to continue treatment, then we might ask the reasoner whether she would judge the following case in a similar way: Suppose Donald was sixty five years old, then would your conclusion still be acceptable? Why or why not? Or, suppose that in order for Donald to lead a satisfactory life, he would have to experience a long period of pain, or the doctors would have to perform heroic actions, then would your conclusion still be acceptable? Why or why not?

If the decision is to allow Donald to make his own decision, then we might ask, "What if Donald was incompetent to make his own decision?", or "What if Donald was a young child?"

The Subsumption Test

If the decision was to continue treatment, then we should try to identify the higher order principle which is being appealed to, (for example, the sacredness of life), and then subject this principle to the other tests. Similarly, if the decision was that Donald C. should have the right to make his own decision, the higher order principle (for example, respecting the autonomy of persons) should be further tested.[7]

In this paper we have noted that the majority of the new critical thinking programs and textbooks avoid, by and large, discussion of criteria for making and evaluating moral arguments. This situation, a consequence of a variety of factors, seems to us to undermine at least some of the aims of developing students' critical thinking. The criteria we have outlined here are, we believe, justifiable to all those committed to a democratic, pluralistic society and thus can be defensibly incorporated into critical thinking programs.

It is important to note that teaching students principle testing, however, is not a matter of teaching them a few simple techniques. According to Coombs:

> ".... judgment in any field cannot be taught by didactic methods alone. It is imparted obliquely by those who have it and exemplify it in their lives and in their work. The good teacher of rational morality, whether in the classroom or the home, is not the one who merely teaches us moral rules or standards of moral reasoning. Rather, he is the one who engages us in moral thinking with him, attuning us to the fruitful question, the important distinction, and the weighting of a bit of evidence. (ibid. p. 30)."

Like Paul (1982) we are concerned that development of critical thinking

not be reduced to "a battery of technical skills which can be mastered more or less one-by-one" (p. 3). Rather, we have to foster 'good judgment' which will involve not only knowledge of the standards for making and assessing empirical and conceptual claims and arguments but also the development of certain dispositions and sensitivities (willingness and disposition to take the role of the least advantaged person in a particular situation; sensitivity to actions which are likely to cause harm to people, and so on). These dispositions and sensitivities, as well as others, require a classroom climate in which the 'critical spirit' (Passmore, 1972, Siegal, 1980) prevails and questions of morality are treated in educationally sound ways.

Endnotes

[1] Coombs (1986) draws a distinction between personal morality and social morality. Our concern here is only with social morality.

[2] Exceptions, among others, include, *The Philosophy for Children Program* (Lipman, 1977), Moore and Parker (1986), and Evans and Applegate (1982).

[3] There might well be controversy over whether a given action which results in someone's death should be considered 'murder', but if it is clearly demonstrated that 'murder' is the correct term, then it is immoral. We know of no sane person who advocated a policy of allowing anyone to kill whomsoever they please.

[4] For instance, the Analysis of Public Issues Program (Shaver and Larkin, 1973; and Oliver and Shaver, 1966); the Value Reasoning Series (AVER, 1978-1990); Lockwood and Harris *Reasoning with Democratic Values* (1985); the *Opposing Viewpoints* Series (1981-1986); and Ruggerio (1973).

[5] For an analysis of these various approaches, see Wright, 1983.

[6] Of course, the 'truth' of an empirical claim may be contentious; then the reasoners have to provide support for their claims. If the empirical claim is not supported then the conclusion either has to be changed or new reasons offered to support the same conclusion.

[7] It may well be the case that application of the subsumption test reveals deep disagreements which preclude any agreement between reasoners. However, if the principle tests are used honestly, the point(s) of disagreement will be revealed, and the arguments used by protagonists will have been subject to some rigorous scrutiny.

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